

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system comprising:

5 a terminal capable of communicating at least one of within and across at least one network, wherein the terminal is included within an organization including a plurality of terminals, each terminal being at at least one of a plurality of positions within the organization;

a primary certification authority (CA) capable of providing an identity certificate to the terminal, wherein the primary CA is capable of issuing an identity certificate to each terminal of the organization;

10 a secondary CA capable of providing at least one role certificate to the terminal based upon the at least one position of the terminal within the organization, wherein the organization includes a plurality of secondary CA's capable of issuing at least one role certificate to respective groups of terminals of the organization based upon the at least one position of each of the respective terminals within the organization; and

15 a server capable of authenticating the terminal based upon the identity certificate and the at least one role certificate of the terminal to thereby determine whether to grant the terminal access to at least one resource of the server.

2. A system according to Claim 1, wherein the terminal comprises a terminal  
20 included within an organization comprising a customer base of a cellular service provider that includes a plurality of terminals, each terminal being at one of a plurality of positions comprising a plurality of service plans offered by the cellular network operator.

3. A system according to Claim 1, wherein the terminal comprises a terminal  
25 included within an organization comprising a customer base of a cellular service provider that includes a plurality of terminals, each terminal being at at least one of a plurality of positions comprising a plurality of services offered by the cellular network operator.

4. A system according to Claim 1, wherein the secondary CA is capable of  
30 providing at least one role certificate each having an associated validity time no greater than a validity time of the identity certificate provided by the primary CA.

5. A system according to Claim 4, wherein the server is capable of authenticating the terminal based upon the validity times of the identity certificate and at least one role certificate of the respective terminal.

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6. A system according to Claim 1, wherein the terminal is capable of requesting access to at least one resource of a server before the server authenticates the terminal, and wherein the server is capable of granting access to the at least one resource if the terminal is authenticated.

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7. A method of authenticating a terminal comprising:  
providing a terminal capable of communicating at least one of within and across at least one network, wherein the terminal is included within an organization including a plurality of terminals, each terminal being at at least one of a plurality of positions within the organization;

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providing an identity certificate to the terminal from a primary certification authority (CA), wherein the primary CA is capable of issuing an identity certificate to each terminal of the organization;

providing at least one role certificate to the terminal from a secondary CA based upon the at least one position of the terminal within the organization, wherein the organization includes a plurality of secondary CA's capable of issuing at least one role certificate to respective groups of terminals of the organization based upon the at least one position of each of the respective terminals within the organization; and

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authenticating the terminal at a server based upon the identity certificate and the at least one role certificate of the terminal to thereby determine whether to grant the terminal access to at least one resource of the server.

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8. A method according to Claim 7, wherein providing a terminal comprises providing a terminal included within an organization comprising a customer base of a cellular service provider that includes a plurality of terminals, each terminal being at one

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of a plurality of positions comprising a plurality of service plans offered by the cellular network operator.

5           9.       A method according to Claim 7, wherein providing a terminal comprises providing a terminal included within an organization comprising a customer base of a cellular service provider that includes a plurality of terminals, each terminal being at at least one of a plurality of positions comprising a plurality of services offered by the cellular network operator.

10           10.       A method according to Claim 7, wherein providing at least one role certificate comprises providing at least one role certificate each having an associated validity time no greater than a validity time of the identity certificate.

15           11.       A method according to Claim 10, wherein authenticating the terminal comprises authenticating the terminal based upon the validity times of the identity certificate and at least one role certificate of the respective terminal.

20           12.       A method according to Claim 7 further comprising:  
requesting, from the terminal, access to at least one resource of a server before  
authenticating the terminal; and  
granting access to the at least one resource if the terminal is authenticated.

25           13.       A terminal included within an organization including a plurality of terminals, each terminal being at at least one of a plurality of positions within the organization, the terminal comprising:  
a controller capable of communicating at least one of within and across at least one network, wherein the controller is capable of obtaining an identity certificate from a primary certification authority (CA) capable of issuing an identity certificate to each terminal of the organization, wherein the controller is also capable of obtaining at least  
30 one role certificate from a secondary CA based upon the at least one position of the terminal within the organization, wherein the organization includes a plurality of

secondary CA's capable of issuing at least one role certificate to respective groups of terminals of the organization based upon the at least one position of each of the respective terminals within the organization; and

5 a memory capable of storing the identity certificate and at least one role certificate,

wherein the controller is also capable of communicating with a server such that the server is capable of authenticating the terminal based upon the identity certificate and the at least one role certificate of the terminal to thereby determine whether to grant the terminal access to at least one resource of the server.

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14. A terminal according to Claim 13, wherein the controller is capable of obtaining an identity certificate from a primary CA capable of issuing an identity certificate to each terminal of the organization comprising a customer base of a cellular service provider that includes a plurality of terminals, each terminal being at one of a plurality of positions comprising a plurality of service plans offered by the cellular network operator.

15 15. A terminal according to Claim 13, wherein the controller is capable of obtaining an identity certificate from a primary CA capable of issuing an identity certificate to each terminal of the organization comprising a customer base of a cellular service provider that includes a plurality of terminals, each terminal being at at least one of a plurality of positions comprising a plurality of services offered by the cellular network operator.

25 16. A terminal according to Claim 13, wherein the controller is capable of obtaining at least one role certificate each having an associated validity time no greater than a validity time of the identity certificate obtained by the controller.

30 17. A terminal according to Claim 16, wherein the controller is also capable of communicating with a server such that the server is capable of authenticating the terminal

based upon the validity times of the identity certificate and at least one role certificate of the respective terminal.

18. A terminal according to Claim 13, wherein the controller is capable of  
5 requesting access to at least one resource of a server before the server authenticates the terminal such that the server is capable of granting access to the at least one resource if the terminal is authenticated.

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